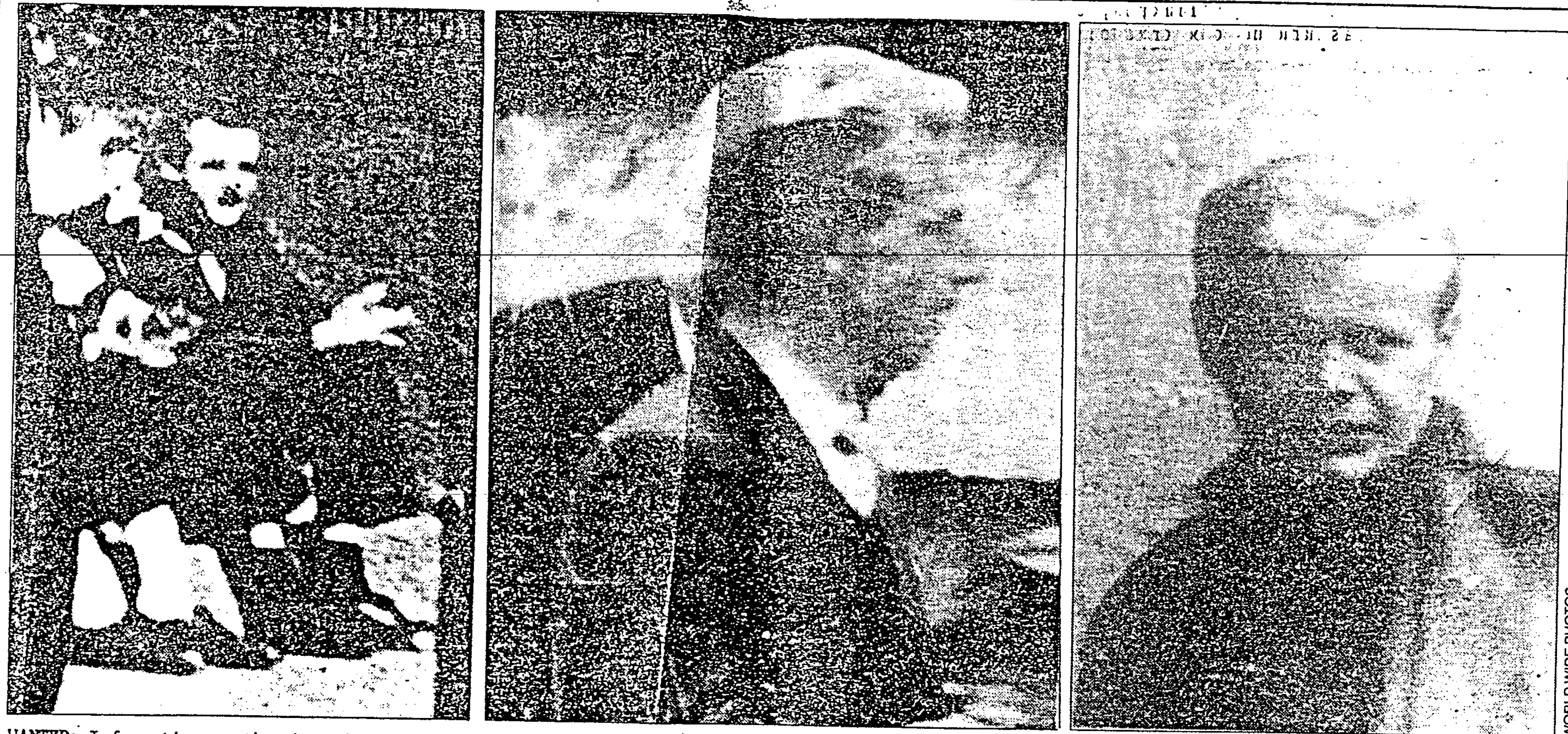

WORLD WIDE PHOTOS

WANTED: Information on the whereabouts of the three men pictured above. The House Select Committee on Assassinations is seeking to question the men in connection with its investigation into the deaths of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. The photo at left was taken in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, moments after President Kennedy was shot. The two other men may have been in Mexico City in the fall of 1963 when Lee Harvey Oswald was there. Anyone with information about these men should contact the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Washington, D.C., 20515.

House Assassination Investigation

By Dick Russell *Continued from page 1*

that included Congressman Richardson Preyer and Carl Stokes. There has long been speculation that someone pretending to be Oswald may have called at the Cuban and Soviet embassies, blazing a false trail.

- The photograph of a man on the curb in Dealey Plaza is known among assassination researchers as "the umbrella man." In films taken as the president was shot, the same man is depicted raising and then lowering a black umbrella as JFK's limousine passes. Some researchers have speculated that the umbrella might actually have been an exotic weapon that fired the fatal shot.

Maurice Bishop is a more proved story. My knowledge of him began in the summer of 1976 when, in the course of researching a book on the assassination, I spent a week in Miami's Cuban exile community. One of the men I hoped to interview was Antonio Veciana, a founder of an anti-Castro group called Alpha 66. In the early 1960s—before the Kennedys curtailed commando raids against Cuba—Veciana had helped raise $100,000 to support such paramilitary attacks. Reportedly, he had also been involved in at least one assassination plot against Fidel Castro. But when I mentioned Veciana's name to a Miami investigator for Senator Richard Schweiker's JFK subcommittee, I was immediately discouraged. The man did live in Miami, I was told, but had recently been released from prison on a narcotics charge and theless, I found Veciana's name in the telephone book and called him. He spoke halting English but agreed to meet me downtown across from the Trailways bus station. He was a stocky Cuban, about six feet tall, and he looked to be about 40. After an hour of small talk in a nearby grill, we drove to one of the big hotels along Miami Beach and found an isolated corner in the lobby. There, I learned that Schweiker's staff was protecting him as its key witness. There, I learned too about Maurice Bishop.

Veciana had been president of a Havana accounting firm when Castro took over Cuba. Embittered by Castro's turn toward Communism, he began to secretly raise funds for an anti-Castro uprising. Shortly thereafter, in 1960, he received a visit from the gentleman who called himself Maurice Bishop. It was to be the first of more than 100 meetings, in a relationship that would last 12 years.

Bishop, who stood about 6'2" and appeared about 45, dressed expensively and had sunspots below his eyes. He told Veciana he was part of an American intelligence service, but instructed him not to ask which one. He wanted to train Veciana to lead a group of anti-Castro Cubans in sabotage and psychological warfare inside Cuba. Another American, whom Veciana knew only as "Melton," assisted with his instruction.

The initial strategy was to spread false rumors among the population about the economic instability of Castro's regime—a CIA tactic later used against Salvador Allende in Chile. When this failed to create a stir, Bishop used Veciana to coordinate an assassination attempt. The first was scheduled as Castro prepared to introduce the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, but was cancelled when Bishop feared a violent Soviet reaction.

The next was planned for October 1961 during a Castro speech, using a bazooka fired from a nearby rooftop. But Castro got wind of the plot and Veciana was forced to flee Cuba by boat. Bishop, who spoke French and possessed a fake passport from Belgium, stayed on undetected.

A month later in Miami, Bishop contacted Veciana again. Together they laid plans to form the group Alpha 66. Veciana traveled to New York, where he worked on another plan to eliminate Castro should he come to speak at the United Nations. Then, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, Veciana says that Bishop organized a series of commando attacks on Russian merchant ships in Cuban harbors. Bishop's plan, he adds, was to force another confrontation.

saying Kennedy would have to be forced to make a decision," he remembers. "The only way was to put him up against the wall. Three ships were attacked in different ports of Cuba. The first one was a mistake in identity; it was a British ship. The other two were Russian. To further make Kennedy reach a point, we held a press conference in Washington to let him know about the commando groups. That was when Kennedy ordered that I be confined to Dade County, Florida."

In response to the terrorist raids, the Justice Department restricted a number of Cuban exiles to Dade County in the spring of 1963. But that summer, Veciana's meetings with Bishop resumed. In August, Bishop had him fly to Dallas.

"When I arrived there," says Veciana, "Bishop had given me the address to a building, a bank or insurance company. Bishop was waiting there with a young guy, an American, and the three of us walked to a cafeteria. The young guy did not say one word. He was very quiet, very strange. When I take a cup of coffee, Bishop says to him: 'I'll meet you in two or three hours.' Bishop and I then talked about the movement and our plans, but not when this guy was there. This was Lee Oswald. I didn't know until November when I saw his picture. But this means Oswald was working with Bishop.

"After the Kennedy assassination," Veciana continues, "the FBI contacted me to ask several questions. At first I was worried but the agent who interviewed me said that it was a matter of routine, nothing important. I didn't tell the agent anything, because I thought it would harm the movement."

After the assassination, Veciana says he waited a year before going back to Dallas. "I never asked Bishop about Oswald," he says, "because Bishop always told me that in this type of work, you just do things, you don't ask." Then, early in 1964, Bishop himself raised the subject. Veciana's cousin was then a leading official in Castro's intelligence service. Many times, Bishop had beseeched Veciana to try to glean information from the cousin.

"Now Bishop asked me if I thought that by getting my cousin a considerable amount of money, would he say he'd talked to Oswald to make it appear that Oswald was working for Castro? Because of this, I asked Bishop if it was true that Oswald had been talking with Castro agents. Bishop said it did not matter if it was true, what was important

Continued on next page

WIDE WORLD

Antonio Veciana, associate of Maurice Bishop and leader

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Continued from preceding page

was to get my cousin to make that statement.

"I always thought that getting Cuban agents to say Oswald was working for them was a cover for Bishop himself," adds Veciana. "I always believed Bishop was working with Oswald during the assassination. About five months later, I brought up the topic about giving money to my cousin. Bishop said there was no need to talk about that plan any longer. He never brought up the topic again, and I never asked."

Over a year passed. With Kennedy's death, the anti-Castro commando raids began to wind down too. Veciana worked to slowly infiltrate some of his people into Cuba and set up internal guerrilla warfare. He was in Los Angeles when Bishop asked for a rendezvous in Las Vegas.

Veciana then moved to Puerto Rico where, using the cover of a sports promoter, he worked for Bishop training people to infiltrate the local Communist movement. In 1968, he went on to Bolivia as a $30,000-a-year banking specialist for the State Department. His other job was to destroy the image of the recently murdered Cuban leader Che Guevara. According to Veciana, three Cuban CIA agents had been involved in Guevara's murder.

While in Bolivia, Veciana also sought to undermine the Leftist govenrment of Juan Torres. "I secretly started a campaign to inform the public that the coins would be devalued. There turned out to be a military coup (Aug 21, 1971). Torres fled to Argentina and was killed." Veciana also maintains that Bishop twice tried to kill Bolivia's Minister of the Interior, a Communist, but the man fled to Cuba.

Veciana's next project centered around Castro's 1971 visit to the Marxist Allende government in Chile. "Once Allende was voted in, we knew Castro would go to Chile. A lot of the officers of the Chilean Army were very cooperative with me and Bishop. They knew everything, when Castro would arrive and where he was going to be. The plan was to have TV cameras with machine guns inside them. We had two agents ID'd as pressmen. All this was planned directly by Bishop.

"Perhaps it was very similar to the Kennedy assassination. Because the person that Bishop assigned to kill Castro was going to get planted with papers to make it appear that he was a Moscow Castro agent and then he would himself be killed. So he would have been seen to be a traitor to Castro.

"It never got off the ground. One of the agents had an appendicitis attack, and had to be rushed to a hospital. The other said he wouldn't do it alone. We had all gone to Chile as diplomats, by car through Peru."

After this, says Veciana, "A lot of differences began to come up. I was tired of waiting so long. So many lives being lost, and Castro still alive. On July 24, 1973, the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) arrested me and accused me of trafficking in cocaine. Two days after the accusation, *I was given my money*. At the end of 15 years, they paid me. All Bishop had ever paid was traveling expenses; he said this was cumulative salary. Before I went to the Atlanta prison, I told Bishop what my family needed. After that, Bishop never contacted me again. I do not know where he is now. But I am sure the trial was a set-up because of my previous activities. I was sentenced to seven years, paroled in 17 months—out very, very quickly. Then the Senate started its investigating."

A few months after our meeting, Schweiker's people brought Veciana to Washington. He was taken secretly to a monthly meeting of the CIA's Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, where it was hoped he might provide a positive identification of Maurice Bishop. Apparently, the House has now ruled out that possibility. Curiously, sources close to the committee say that Veciana is not expected to be called to testify when the JFK hearings begin on September 6. It is rumored that, despite the committee's show of earnestness, its intent to once again depict Os-collusion on the planning.

At last report, Antonio Veciana still lives in Miami. Although I originally agreed not to use his name, he has since appeared on a TV documentary with a portion of his story. If Maurice Bishop can be found, perhaps the tangled web that still surrounds the Kennedy assassination and related events of the '60s may yet find its way into the history books. ■

CTL Goes Inc.

By Terry Curtis Fox

Consider: a group of executives—all highly paid, just under top-management level—come down en masse to Astor Place and enter a basement theatre. There, for several hours every week, a bunch of underpaid actors teach them how to act like an ensemble. The executives get to do trust exercises; they are taught how to properly project their voices. In exchange for these lessons, the executives pay fees which are high enough to keep the actors happily performing for very little in a theatre which loses money night after night.

self, gained gallons of praise from Richard Eder in *The New York Times*. (Our own Michael Feingold was less enthused, for good reason: the Colonnades actors are among the worst in town.) Still, with a 75-seat house (stunningly designed by Lessac's old friend, Robert U. Taylor, one of the country's leading set designers), Lessac couldn't pay his cast a living wage. He didn't want to lose either his theatre or his loyal band of followers just when they were finally about to be an established success.

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V 1960 visited by Mr. Bishops (Spoke French // false Belgian passport.
100 meetings + // relationship that was to last 12 years.
but don't ask what one.
wanted to train Cubans in
"MELTON". helped with his introduction — to spread false rumors in
Cuba // then to coord ass. attempt // ([illegible]) // Oct '61, bazooka during Castro speech.
Dick Russell Village Voice.

Nov '61 Bishop meets V again — from Alpha '66
N.Y. plan to kill Castro at UN.
after missile crisis — plan to hit Russian ships in Cuban harbors.
B's plan was to force another confrontation.
V: Kennedy was known to be forced to make — decision. The only way was to put him up against the wall. 3 ships were attacked in different parts of Cuba. 1st a mistake (British) — the other 2 were Russian. To further make K. react a point was held a press conference in Washington to let him know about the commando groups. But no when JFK ordered that I be confined to "Dade County" File —"
In response to the raids the Justice Dept ~~[illegible]~~ restricted a number of exiles to Dade Co. in spring '63
Henning // Loran Hall etc arrested = "Operation 40" people.
But that summer ~~Bishop~~ V asked to go to Dallas.

Oswald Session

After Kennedy assass. FBI watched me — but told it was routine // I didn't tell anyone anything because I thought it would be [illegible] movement // Early in '64 Bishop raised question of cousin for first time. Veciana's cousin then leading official in Castro's intelligence service. "[illegible]
Bishop asked if I thought my cousin would take money — Oswald telling to Castro agents — Bishop said it did not matter if it was true. What was important was to get V's cousin to make a statement.

B // Mexico ('63)

burgundy inn
911 RUE BURGUNDY
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70116
Phone: 504-524-4401

WILLIAM LANGKOPP
General Manager